

A R E P L Y

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TO THE

LETTER OF BISHOP HOPKINS,

ADDRESSED TO DR. HOWE,

IN THE PRINT

CALLED "THE AGE,"

OF DECEMBER 8th, 1863.

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FB,

This reply has been written, not with any desire to prolong a controversy,—still less with any wish to come down from the vindication of a great principle, to a mere personal strife. It has been prepared to meet the honest wants of a few minds, that crave, without partisan prejudice, to know the merits of the case, and to see the specious representations of Bishop Hopkins' Letter refuted. This reply is not published to the world, nor will it be unless a public rejoinder calls it forth. It is privately printed, and its circulation, under present circumstances, will be quite limited.

The Right Rev. John H. Hopkins, D. D.,

Bishop of the Diocese of Vermont.

RIGHT REV. SIR:

Your letter, bearing date November 10th, appeared in the newspaper called "*The Age*," on the 8th of December. It seems to have been long upon the road between Burlington and Philadelphia, or to have been detained for nearly a month, while the doubt was being settled, whether it were not better that it should never see the light; some of your friends think that the question was decided unwisely at last.

My statement, in a former letter, that the "Protest" against the mischievous dissemination of your "Bible View of Slavery" in this Diocese, was the concurrent and spontaneous issue of many minds, and not the sole device of him whose name was first affixed to it, seems to have driven you to the conclusion, that if the Bishop of Pennsylvania was not the "*leader*" in this movement, he was of necessity "*led*." We are very much in the habit, in this Diocese, of moving in concert with our Bishop, '*pari passu*.' It is not impossible that there may be persons in the Church, by whom it is held to be quite contumacious for Presbyters to speak, or even think, before they have heard the key-note of legitimate sentiment from the Episcopal throne.

Your perplexity, respecting the state of mind in which men could have been, who signed, "more in sorrow than in anger," a Protest against a proceeding, which they said "challenged their *indignant* reprobation," surprises me. Surely, your rhetorical studies must have made you familiar, if your own experience never has, with the difference between "anger" and "indignation." Pardon me for recalling to your memory, that "anger" is defined by high authority, to be "the strong passion or emotion, impressed or excited by a sense of injury received or in contemplation;" while

"indignation," the same author says, "expresses a strong and elevated disapprobation of mind, which is inspired by something flagitious in the conduct of another." Archbishop Tillotson, (after Seneca, I believe,) says "anger is a short madness." "Indignation," says another, "flows from a high sense of honor and virtue."

As you pass over some things in my previous letter, to come the earlier to what you pronounce "the *only real reason*" assigned by me, for our "extraordinary denunciation," to wit: The "Protest;" I will not linger long over the circumstances which you rehearse, whereby the Diocese of Pennsylvania failed, years ago, of becoming the Episcopal See of the present Bishop of Vermont. Providence accomplishes its benign purposes often by remote, and unobserved agencies. I honor the self-abnegation which enabled a respected Presbyter, who lacked but one vote to give him promotion to a higher office, to cast that vote for his sole competitor. And I confess I am thankful that in this day we are not presided over by a Bishop differing 'toto cælo,' from four-fifths of the clergy, and probably a larger portion of the laity, on a great moral question, on which none can be indifferent, and to which the current of events is moving our country to give a solution in practical conformity with the pronounced judgment of Christendom.

"*Conscientious principle*," then kept you back from honor; the same has now, you say, moved you to 'act' in a way, which is here esteemed not so creditable to your modesty, and indicative of a moral or mental perversity, which brings upon you reproach, if not disgrace.

I have a mingled feeling, partly of respect, and partly of pity, (if you will allow an humble Presbyter to express such a sentiment, in a case where it may touch his ecclesiastical superior,) for any Christian man whose conscience is in that morbid condition, which impels him to contend uselessly, and despite the sacrifice of paramount truths and interests, for an Institution not essential, and which, now, the world accounts repugnant to the spirit of the Gospel. Old John Brown, in all good conscience, went down to free the blacks

in Virginia, hoping to arm them against their masters; and blind to the bloodshed and rapine, and anarchy, which would have followed his success. We honor his loyalty to his own convictions, for which he threw away his life. We pity his fanaticism, which impelled him to pursue one right, at the cost of many wrongs. At a later day, and when under the providence of God, by other means the shackles are being stricken from those very slaves, and the whole course of events looks toward the breaking of every yoke, a Christian Bishop sacrifices his official influence, indisposes men to hear him preach the Gospel of the blessed God, brings reproach upon the Communion of which he is a Chief Minister, imperils the peace, and obstructs the prosperity of his own Diocese, just to make himself the champion of slavery—to assert its sanction in the Bible; which, if he could prove as incontestably as the shining of the sun in Heaven, it would not be a tenet that would save a single soul, or advance the prosperity of the Church, or illustrate the glory of the Redeemer and Saviour of mankind. Which shall prevail when we witness such a spectacle,—respect for the honesty which will utter the word that is impotent *to* effect anything but self-destruction, or pity for the infatuation, which to attain a contingent and questionable good, madly sacrifices everything else?

The effort of yourself, and those who have made political use of you, to fling upon the Clergy who protested the charge of being the first to enter the political arena, is ingenious and persistent, but it will not serve your purpose. You state the case thus: several most respectable citizens—some of whom you knew as prominent churchmen, of whose political affinities you had no knowledge—asked you for an expression of your views on the scriptural aspect of slavery. You gave them in extenso, and, without consulting you, the Democratic party took the communication which you made to your friends and employed it as a campaign document on the eve of a local election. The protesters, anxious, you say, to forefend the influence of your production, as being adverse to the party to which, you allege, they belong, went in of their own accord,

and without the mediation of any "respectable gentlemen," to the political conflict.

Now, I did not—as you insinuate—imply in my former letter any doubt of the truth of your declaration, that you did not *know* the political status of your correspondents, or the fact that your letter would be used in connexion with the Pennsylvania gubernatorial election. I purge myself by a direct denial of your charge—"You rudely choose to treat my statement as untrue." I did say that your former experience might have helped you to *guess* what sort of use would be made of your lucubrations. I did suggest that you *might have known*, if you had paused to inquire. I did maintain that you *ought to have done so* to preserve your consistency as one averse to any clerical meddling with politics and in modest consideration of your past and present relations to this Diocese. Let me now put it to you in another way, which the record will justify.

Your New York correspondents who called out the first edition of your "Bible View of Slavery," stated in their letter of request, as the reason why they "asked you to favor [them] with your opinions" that "the dangerous crisis to which our National Union has arrived, is universally known to have arisen from the persevering agitation of the question of slavery; and we hold it to be the duty of every patriotic man to aid as far as possible in giving a right direction to the public mind." Your Philadelphia correspondents who called out the second, expurgated edition, declare "We believe that false teachings on this subject have had a great deal to do with bringing on the unhappy strife, &c. It is of the deepest importance to the public welfare that a sound public opinion should exist on this topic. Believing that the communication of your views *as a christian Bishop*, &c., may contribute to this desirable result, we respectfully venture to beg that you will favor us with them and *permit us to make them public*." Now both these committees expressly state to you as the reason for asking your interference, that the present national strife has arisen from the question of slavery. The Philadelphians think that false teachings on this subject have done the mis-

chief. "Your views on the scriptural aspect of slavery contained in a letter addressed by you to some gentlemen in New York," they say, "have come to our notice and been perused with satisfaction and profit." On this evidence of your soundness, they judge you qualified to rectify the public mind, and for that express purpose they invite your testimony.

I should indeed "insult" you if I were to suppose that you are ignorant of the fact of which your friends thus premonished you, that the subject of slavery is at the bottom of our national strife. It would be an equal imputation upon your intelligence to assume or *allow* that you are ignorant of the fact that a party in the North calling themselves Democrats, are sympathisers in this strife with the slaveholders of the South, and laboring to conserve for them their peculiar institution. It is a matter of notoriety also, and you are not re-cluse enough to have escaped the intelligence that another large party, made up alike of Republicans and real Democrats are persuaded that we can have no National Union and peace while slavery is thus cherished.

When this war had been for more than two years in progress, certain gentlemen, acquainted with your pro-slavery sentiments, asked you to put them in writing, *not for their own private edification, but with permission "to make them public."* And yet you shield yourself behind the plea that you had not been informed of their individual political associations, and only knew them as churchmen, to give credence to the idea that you did not realize that your production was available for any political purpose, or solicited with any partizan design. Was not your pamphlet in the interest of slavery? And is not the (self-styled) Democratic party endeavoring to sustain it? And if your "Bible View" had power to modify public opinion, did you not know what party it would help? Could you escape the inference that they who solicited it for publication belong to that faction which is compassing sea and land to make one proselyte for slavery, or any other exclusively Southern interest? A contribution to pro-slavery literature at this crisis, is an

offering—no matter through whose hand it is transmitted, whether he be churchman or independent—to the political power which notoriously favors the perpetuation of slavery. You knew that your letter was to be published; you expected that it would be published in Pennsylvania, where the gentlemen reside who had called for it. It could have been no surprise to you, therefore, that it was circulated in Pennsylvania by the political faction, one of whose cardinal notions of social economy it was written to vindicate! Where were you to be found in your apparition on this topic, but in the place to which your professed friends had taken you, not blindfold, but with your eyes open—in the arena of political strife? There you were *followed*, only with a protest against your unseemly and intrusive appearance.

A writer in the London "*Guardian*" of November 18th, understood to be one of the Philadelphia gentlemen who requested your views on "The Scriptural Aspects of Slavery," (perhaps G. M. W. will deny it,) reports himself as follows: "Elections in some of the more populous Northern States were approaching, and it was thought that if public opinion, expressed through the ballot-box, could be brought to bear upon the Administration, so as to indicate a dissent by the majority from their policy, a change of measures, looking to an adjustment by negotiation of our differences with the South, might occur. * * * * *

Entertaining these views, some gentlemen, who were Churchmen as well as Democrats, solicited permission from Bishop Hopkins, in April last, to re-publish the portion of his pamphlet embracing a Bible View of Slavery. The Bishop assented to the request, and the re-publication took place in May last. An extraordinary demand for the article sprang up in some of the Northern States, and in September, just before the election was to take place in Pennsylvania, an effort was made to counteract its effect."

The political object for which the re-publication of the pamphlet was solicited is here distinctly avowed, by one of those, I believe, who asked for it; and it is alleged that as the election in Pennsylvania drew near, an effort was deemed

necessary to counteract its effect, to wit, the *political* effect of its distribution in this State; and yet the good Bishop of Vermont "had not the least hint of any political use," and "the first intimation to [him] about its being circulated by the Democratic party was long after it had passed out of his hands." Was ever anybody so innocent of any political design, consciousness or influence? How adroitly your correspondents must have managed (having no other than a political intent in their minds from the beginning) to have written you repeatedly, and yet have given you no inkling of their purpose! They well sustained the reputation of Philadelphia lawyers for shrewdness, and have made of you a conspicuous illustration of that child-like simplicity, which in some of its aspects is becoming to a minister of the Gospel, but which in this instance might well have given place to the wisdom of the serpent, as well as the harmlessness of the dove.

You profess to belong to no party, though thus sustaining the interests of one. You charge us with mad zeal as partizans, because we remonstrate indignantly against your degrading a grand question of morals and humanity by associating it with such party strife.

I belong to whatever party maintains the God-given rights of man in just so far as their principles and policy favor and set forward the purposes for which Christ came; among which are recounted these, "to preach deliverance to the captives, and to set at liberty them that are bruised." To that extent I am amenable to your charge—my "politics are part of my religion."

I do not acknowledge that my attempt to show that your protest against the *political aspect* of the pastoral letter issued by the House of Bishops is inconsistent with your course in the proceeding against which the clergy of Pennsylvania protested was "ingenious," or required to be so. It was a plain statement of the facts. Wherein you have attempted to mystify them, I will again set them in their true light.

You virtually assert "the right of any bishop or clergyman,

acting as an individual, to publish his opinions on general principles of politics," &c., and would have us understand that it is this right which you have exercised in giving your opinions on Slavery, the Declaration of Independence and the Right of Secession. You object to the action of the House of Bishops, because that House is an integral part of the General Convention, and "the General Convention represents the whole Church," and is "exclusively religious" in its functions. Of course, you mean it represents the whole Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States. In like manner the Diocesan Convention of Vermont represents the whole Protestant Episcopal Church in Vermont, and the bishop is an integral, and in everybody's opinion (not excepting his own) a very important part of it. The bishops composing the House of Bishops might, according to your concession, publish their opinions on political topics severally or jointly without transgressing their rights, so long as they would speak or "act merely as individuals." They would transgress the limits should they meddle with such topics *officially*. What shall be said to vindicate the venerable man who has once and again published (through the agency of others) his "Bible View of Slavery," not over his private "individual" signature "John Henry Hopkins," but has converted the proceeding into an official act by appending to his name, the style and title "Bishop of the Diocese of Vermont?" He bears the same relation to the "whole church in that Diocese which the House of Bishops bear to the church in the United Dioceses. Their letter became a pastoral one by their official action in its adoption. Yours became in appearance and structure, pastoral by your official signature. And that it was so understood by those in this Diocese who relished its doctrines may be inferred from the fact, that over your fulmination at Bishop Potter of October 5th, 1863, was blazoned in one of the Democratic papers of this City, ~~with~~ the staring prefix in large capitals, "A Pastoral Letter by the Right Reverend John Henry Hopkins, &c., Presiding Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church." The pastoral of the House of Bishops was legiti-

mate, whether judicious or not, for they sent it, not to the Church in Canada, but to the Church in the United States. Yours was misdirected, because it was issued, not in and for the Diocese of Vermont, but in and for the Diocese of Pennsylvania; and it was not only out of place, but on a class of topics which, according to your own showing, the "Bishop of Vermont" had no right to discuss.

"The most unjustifiable part of [my] elaborate production," in your judgment, is that in which I advert to your "Pamphlet as it was first published in January, 1861, and to which you say I "had no right to refer."

It was yourself who put me on the track of that pamphlet. It had not, "come to my notice and been perused" by me as by your Philadelphia correspondents. You now state that it was "withdrawn from circulation more than two years ago." From you I first learned of its existence, and it was introduced to me by these words in your prefatory letter to Messrs. Wharton, Browning and others, under date of Burlington Vt., May 2d, 1863. "The PAMPHLET published in January, 1861, to which you have so kindly referred, is *at you service in its original form*, as I have not found in the numerous answers which it has drawn forth any reason for changing my opinion." This set me on the search for a copy of that earlier edition; and I confess I was startled on comparing the two; to find that the production given to the world through the Philadelphia solicitors was not *the pamphlet in its original form*. The part of it which was reprinted vindicating "not only slavery in the abstract, but slavery as it exists in the Cotton States," and controverting the principles of the American Declaration of Independence; seemed so fairly to lead to the doctrine of Secession, as to be scarce complete without an argument in defence of it. And, sure enough, when I perused the treatise as you originally prepared it, I found that it was consummated with the sequence which, in its later form, it was seen to lack. I was willing to suppose that this most odious part had been subsequently stricken out by the friends to whom you intrusted the pamphlet for re-publication, or by you at their request, and from pru-

dential motives. I confess I am pained by your avowal now made "When I gave my consent to the re-publication of my Pamphlet in May, 1863, *all this matter was crossed out by my own hand*, and nothing was suffered to go forth except what belonged to the 'Bible View of Slavery.' "

And now, you tell me, Right Rev. Sir, that I had no right to allude to this discrepancy, or to bring to light the fact that you had attempted to justify secession in the first edition of your pamphlet. (I think the effort was discernible—as I have attempted to show in my former letter,—also in the expurgated edition, although the offensive word was not permitted to remain.) I had a right, I conceive, under the common rules of discussion, in affixing a certain interpretation to language before me, to refer to other writings of the author under remark to show that he entertained the sentiments imputed; and especially to bring forward expunged passages which once had formed part of the same production. And I do assure you that I did not use the facts of the case, as an "*argumentum ad invidiam*," with any desire to cast "odium" upon you; but as proving the fitness of that expression which characterized your "view" as "an effort to sustain the States in rebellion in their wicked attempt."

You fault me, moreover, not only for referring to the old pamphlet, but also for only referring to it. You intimate that if I stirred the subject at all, I should have given besides the introductory sentiment which contains the gist of the whole,—“In my humble judgment they [the Southern States] have a right to secede,”—“all the rest of [your] argument and advice upon the subject.” The suggestion is preposterous. I had no wish to disseminate your arguments in favor of secession; and would it not have been exceedingly ungenerous to you had I expanded the part of my letter which referred to that subject by republishing *all* which you or your friends, or both had thought it prudent to suppress?

After a very brief and eclectic outline of the course of your reasoning on secession, you rehearse to me at length (or rather to the public), the flourish of trumpets about “the Flag of the Union,” and “the heroes and patriots of the

Revolution," which in your New York letter succeeded the solemn dirge of secession. It seems, as seen in its appropriate place in the letter, like a salve prepared for spirits which may have been wounded by what had been said before. Doubtless if secession had been permitted to consummate its destruction of our Union, and to retain all the public spoils with which it attempted to go laden, Jefferson Davis himself would have afforded a few high-sounding sentences as a complimentary salvo to the Old Flag, and the glorious memories of the past.

It was ingenious (but was it ingenuous?) to select this saving clause—this paragraph of palliation—which is no part of your development of the question of secession, but which was written to follow it as a swallow of water follows a pill; was it fair to set this forth at the close of your meagre outline, and then add "*Now here is the whole story* of which you took care to give only one little and obnoxious part?"

In your letter to me you tell the time and circumstances under which your New York letter was written, and the Christian motive by which you were animated, desirous as a minister of the Prince of Peace, to forefend the horrors of civil war. I am willing to give all fair consideration to those circumstances; and I honor and have sympathy in the effort, which aimed at a peaceable solution of our National difficulties. Your whole treatment of the subject of secession, however, assumed that the South were justifiable in their attempt to dissolve the Union; and you pleaded for delay until a pro-slavery Supreme Court might have opportunity to pronounce it *all right*, and a foreign Arbiter be called in to divide the National effects.

In your ingenious exculpation of yourself for having entertained such opinions three years ago, when everything was thrown into turmoil by the novelty of the condition of public affairs, you allege that other men, distinguished for their patriotism, have in past times, and under stress of divers circumstances, maintained the right of secession. Josiah Quincy, and Abraham Lincoln, and Horace Greely even, you claim as earlier apostles of your faith on this doc-

trine. Whether they would acknowledge the identity of their creed with yours at any past time, I cannot say. I sincerely wish you could find it in your heart to declare that you are in harmony with them now. Indeed, after reading your careful recital of the perplexing condition of things at the trying juncture in which your "Bible View" was first put forth, and the pacific motives and hopes which you then entertained, I almost expected, as well as earnestly desired, to find you declaring that since the mists of the hour have passed away, and the Rebellion has disclosed itself in its true character, you have changed your opinion, and now see that under such incentives, and for such nefarious ends the Southern States have no right to secede. But your letter contains no such avowal. You just allege that "Congress undertook the office of the Supreme Court by deciding on the fundamental point of secession," (which is a very intelligible mutter of discontent,) and then proceed to add that you "*acquiesced as a peaceable citizen*, whatever your private "opinions might be."

All that you wrote on that most exciting topic—the doctrine of secession—you profess, honestly I have no doubt, to have written, in execution of your sacred office as one ordained to preach "Peace, good will to men!" It seems now incredible that so thoughtful a man, and of such long and varied experience could have known so little of the temper of the American people, among whom he has lived nearly all his days, as to have expected them to be soothed, and pacified by such counsels. You were conscious however of no other influence operating upon your mind, save the desire to fulfil to the extent of your ability, your vow to maintain and set forward quietness, love and peace among all men. "To suppose that you could have any other object" you say, "is simply absurd." Influences are sometimes so insidious as to leave us entirely unaware of their power and operation. Knowing by what slight association with Southern men, many other persons have been won to espouse their cause, or at least to extenuate their fault, I may be pardoned for entertaining and expressing the conceit that your seclusion on Suwanee Mountain,

shortly before the rebellion, in the company of Bishop Elliott and Bishop Polk, for a period of several months, engaged as an architect and general adviser on the plans of the great projected "University of the South," (which was a thoroughly sectional and Union-rending device,) may have contributed to "intensify," if not to create your Southern proclivities of doctrine and sentiment. I do not suppose you aware of any such influence, I think you too conscientious a man to yield knowingly in your judgment upon a great moral question, to any mere personal considerations. But you are human and subject to like passions with others; and, therefore, liable to be warped by the same petty and insignificant pressure which we see has turned thousands of intelligent men from their propriety.

But I must hasten to a close, lest you should hereafter *complain* of my prolixity, as you before did of insult and misrepresentation. You aver, however, that you did not *complain* when you were addressing Bishop Potter,—because "*complaining* is the work of weakness, addressing itself to some stronger power, and the term is in no sense applicable to my answer to your Bishop." On the relative strength of Bishops, it does not become me to pronounce. Some may think it does not even become you, when you are one of the parties compared. An authority of repute that lies upon my table gives me the impression that I used a most courteous word when I said that you *complained*; for I read that, "when used in relation to persons, *complaint* is the act of a superior; *murmuring* that of an inferior." So, you see, I did not forget, any more than yourself, that you are the "Senior" Bishop.

You think it preposterous, and extravagant in me, to have stated, on Southern authority, that your Letter of 1861 "*did its part* in firing the Southern heart and intensifying its determination to sacrifice the Union in order to maintain and perpetuate Slavery," seeing that six of the States had already seceded, when the mischievous pamphlet was published. I will answer this by a simple illustration. Your heart was *fired* by the Pennsylvania Protest, and you deter-

mined to write a book, as evinced and declared in your letter to the Bishop of this Diocese: it was "fired", again by my letter, vindictory of the Protest, and your determination to write a book (see Job xxxi., 35,) was thereby "*intensified*."

In this discussion, I have been free from any endeavor to impute to you other sentiments on the subject of Slavery, or its relations to our social system, than you yourself have declared. Why should I wish to mirepresent you; an aged Bishop of the Church of my love, to whom I have been accustomed to bow with profound respect, and from whom I have received many personal kindnesses? When I heard that you had answered me, I was filled with hope that you had retracted, or modified, or explained some of those obnoxious doctrines which have so shocked and offended the great body of our Clergy in this and other Dioceses. I hoped that you had at least reverted to your published sentiments of 1851. I hoped you had re-affirmed what you then declared, in Note IV. on your Buffalo Lecture, and brought it out from its obscurity, as an appendage, and given it a place in the text and substance of your present testimony.

You then wrote: "Slavery has become, and is daily more and more becoming, a theme of reproach and denunciation, so that it would be difficult, at this day, to find a man bold enough to advocate it openly, from one end of Europe to the other. Such is public opinion, and we all know that public opinion is the strongest power of the Nineteenth century."

You further wrote: "The Declaration of American Independence, from the pen of Jefferson, proclaimed to the world the fundamental principle, that all men were created free and equal—a principle which is certainly at open war with slavery."

Again: "With the force of a strong and almost universal sentiment pressing upon them, is it strange that the feeling against slavery should be prevalent amongst all classes throughout the Free States of the Union? Is it any wonder that the American citizen is forced to hang down his head, when the voice of Europe haunts him with the contradiction between our republican theory and our practice? Is it a

subject for just surprise that the Northern States, who know that our Government made the first declaration against slavery; should be humbled at the reflection that England has done so much to abolish it, by consistent action upon the principle; while the evil is growing in our country, year by year, into greater magnitude than before?"

But you seem now to have recoiled from these truthful and generous sentiments; or to have discovered that they do not consort very well with others, of which you are more tenacious. At any rate, you now indite and amplify others, which an understanding less acute than your own cannot reconcile with them. In your New York letter you declare,—and in the Second, the expurgated Edition, repeat, and in your letter to me, do not soften or qualify this abhorrent doctrine,—“*The slavery of the Negro race, as maintained in the Southern States, appears to me fully authorised both in the Old and New Testaments.*” You still persist in speaking of the curse upon Canaan, as if it rested upon all the posterity of Ham, saying,—“God, in His wisdom and providence, caused the Patriarch Noah to predict that *the Negro* should be the *servant* of servants to the *posterity of Japhet.*” You still maintain, that “the same Almighty Ruler, who alone possesses the power, has *wonderfully adapted the race to their condition.* For every candid observer agrees that the *Negro is happier and better as a Slave, than as a Freeman.*” You still “*utterly discard* the famous propositions of the Declaration of Independence: All men are created equal, and are by their Creator endowed with certain inalienable rights;” and, yet strangely inconsistent, you advert, with seeming satisfaction, to a plan which you broached in your Lecture at Buffalo, in 1851, for the abolition of this GOD-IMPOSED CURSE, to which the Creator has *wonderfully adapted the Negro*, and *under which* you say *he is happier and better than freedom* would make him!

If Slavery be the normal condition of the negro—determined for him by the perpetual fiat of the Almighty,—and for which the Creator has in his very constitution adapted him—so that it is the best and happiest state of which he is

capable,—how could you, in duty to God, or in humanity to his abject creature, devise and attempt to popularize a scheme for reversing this divine decree and handing over the negroes of our land to the demoralization and miseries of freedom?

If you be injured in reputation or influence by the publicity which has been given to this matter, impute it not to others.—Had you been content to hold your 'peculiar views on "*Slavery as it exists in the Southern States*" as private opinions, they would have involved you in no disagreement with your fellow-men. You attempted to propagate them, and to lend them the help of your official name and influence, and then they became obnoxious to criticism. If you suffer by their notoriety, your injury proceeds from the utterance of offensive opinions, not from the men who try to counteract them. If you have identified yourself with a system of wickedness doomed to destruction, you must share its fate, but "*felo de se*" will be the verdict which a fair inquest will pronounce upon you. Your forthcoming book (if you confine yourself to the programme afforded in your letters to Bishop Potter, and myself), will "leave the matter, in my humble judgment, worse [for you] than it was before." You will appear as a champion on an abandoned field; a defender of the slaveries of olden times which nobody in these living times is disposed to assail; and you will seem to have woven the patchwork mantle of Patristic Dicta and Papal Bulls, and Conciliar Decrees, and Episcopal Pastorals, not to cover up the sins of the ages in which they were written, but a multitudinous and unparalleled enormity of our own time and country,—which matches with no bondage ever known upon earth, and which no antiquated excuses will hide from shame or save from destruction.

Yours, with still great respect,

M. A. DE WOLFE HOWE.

Philadelphia, January 8th, 1864.